

VZCZCXRO4283  
RR RUEHROV  
DE RUEHAE #0220 1130825  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 220825Z APR 08  
FM AMEMBASSY ASMARA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 9617  
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RUEPADJ/CJTF-HOA J2X CAMP LEMONIER DJ  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUMICEA/JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASMARA 000220

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

PARIS AND LONDON FOR AFRICA WATCHERS  
DEPT FOR AF/E

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/20/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [ER](#) [SO](#)

SUBJECT: ARS DIVIDED ON COOPERATING WITH UNITED STATES

REF: NAIROBI 902

Classified By: Ambassador Ronald K. McMullen for reason 1.4 (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Following the March 31-April 4 meeting of the Alliance for the Re-Liberation of Somalia (ARS) leaders in Nairobi with Embassy officials (reftel), the ARS leaders have made a concerted effort to align the Asmara-based membership towards a cooperative stance with the United States. Certain ARS members, particularly the Vice Chair of the ARS Central Committee (egged on by the Eritrean government), remain intransigent towards change. End Summary.

¶2. (C) PolOff met April 16 with Professor Abdurahman Haji Adam Ibbi (Assistant to the ARS Chairman, and member of the Nairobi delegation) for ARS views following meetings in Nairobi with U.S. Ambassador Rannenberger and Special Envoy Yates. Ibbi explained that the ARS as a whole did not fully buy into the delegation's position of working proactively with the United States towards inclusive political reconciliatory efforts in Somalia. The particular points of contention included the proposed presence of UN peacekeepers and opening of dialogue with the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). PolOff observed this rift in ideology in a previous (April 10) meeting with Mahad Yusuf, a diaspora representative and central committee member of the ARS. Mahad, at the time, remained defiant against the agreements made in Nairobi, citing, "regardless of what was said in the (Nairobi) meeting, the ARS has core principles which cannot be altered." These consisted of the aforementioned points of contention regarding UN peacekeepers and opening dialogue with the TFG.

¶3. (C) Since the delegation's return, Ibbi has been appointed an internal "moderator" for factions within the ARS, and has been actively encouraging ARS members to consolidate efforts by cooperating with the United States. Thus far, Ibbi states his approach has been effective in that he has swayed many of the more hard-lined ARS members towards this point of view.

¶4. (C) The Vice Chair of the ARS Central Committee appears to be the primary objector to cooperation with the United States. He remains staunchly opposed to the resolutions made in Nairobi, according to Ibbi. Ibbi believes that the Vice Chair is being manipulated by lower-ranking members of the ARS in order to push their hard-line agenda. Ibbi added that Government of the State of Eritrea (GSE) officials have advised the Vice Chair to keep the ARS segregated from USG

initiatives.

15. (C) COMMENT: Given PolOff's separate conversation with Mahad Yusuf, Ibbi's assessment of the split in the ARS seems credible. Additionally, the regional tour approach of the ARS leaders (first Nairobi, then Djibouti), gives the appearance that the ARS is indeed gradually leaning towards a more moderate, cooperative stance. If the Vice Chair is, in fact, hindering a portion of the ARS membership from re-aligning its perspective towards this newfound tone of cooperation, his efforts could prove to be a substantial stumbling block towards ensuring a united ARS dedicated to open, multilateral dialogue. End Comment.  
MCMULLEN